

CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

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NO. 39.

PHILADELPHIA, SATURDAY, APRIL 29, 1820.

VOL. I.

A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another, as I have loved you—JOHN xxiii. 34.

FOR THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS.

(Concluded from our last.)

The enemy, defeated in his first attack on the integrity of Christ, makes a second—he proceeds with Jesus to Jerusalem, probably endeavouring to ensnare him by his conversation on the way. When they reached the holy city, he leads Jesus to the top of one of the wings or porches of the temple, which stood on the acclivity of a hill, and from which there was a deep descent to the valley beneath—the insidious foe begins, “*If thou be the son of God, cast thyself down from this place*”—“Prove, make it plain by this miracle that thou art the Messiah. If thou throw thyself headlong from this height, and alight without receiving any injury, it will be evident to all, that thou art the Messiah, but if thou hast not either courage to make this attempt, or power to execute it, no longer entertain so vain and empty an imagination. And, in order to add force to his persuasions, the adversary quotes a passage from the Psalms, in which God more especially promises his providential protection to the righteous, and which of course he would hardly withhold from his beloved son. But observe the sophistry of the tempter! God, in the Psalm, promises his special protection to the righteous in those dangers which they have neither sagacity to foresee, nor power to avert; not in those, into which men wantonly and presumptuously rush, hazarding their lives only to shew their intrepidity. Our Lord instantly exposes the fallacy of his opponent, and says,—“*Thou shalt not tempt the LORD thy God,*” meaning that they cannot expect the protection of God, who provoke him to withhold it by their rashness, or their pride. The tempter being thus disappointed in obtaining that sort of evidence, which he wished,

with respect to the character of Christ, and perhaps seeing him resolutely determined to persevere in the office, into which he had been inaugurated at his baptism, makes a third attempt to work on the mind of Jesus by the attractions of ambition, and thus to render his ministry subservient to the temporal projects of this wily adversary. He accordingly went with our Lord to the top of some high mountain, which was probably in the immediate neighbourhood of Jerusalem, from which the eye could, almost at one view, expatiate over the whole extent of Palestine, and faintly discern some of the adjoining regions, subject to the Roman empire.* While Jesus, who seems from some few notices in the Evangelists to have been particularly attached to such elevated sites, was surveying the surrounding country, the adversary, probably discoursing with eloquence on its beauties and its riches, engages to make Jesus master of the whole, on one single condition, that he would worship him, or should do him that kind of homage, which inferiors offer to a superior, and render him those tokens of

* “*And the Devil taking him up into a high mountain shewed unto him παντα τα βασιλεια της οικουμένης.*” Literally “*all the kingdoms of the habitable earth,*” or, as Matthew has it, *του κόσμου of the world.*

It is evident in these passages, that figure of speech is used, in which a whole is put for a part. We sometimes use the word “*world*” as when we say “*all the world knows it,*” when perhaps we mean no larger portion of the world than what is comprised in the men and women of a small neighbourhood.—And thus when the Evangelist says “*all the kingdoms of the world*” he means evidently only the several provinces of that part of the world which was called Palestine, and which, at that time were divided into separate governments under the sons of Herod, Archeus, Antipas and Philip, who were called *ethnarchs tetrarchs*, or sometimes were even honoured with the name of kings.

submission which men pay to God.—The tempter undertook to assist Jesus in obtaining the dominion of his native country; and it seems, on this condition, that he should use his power in subservience to his will. It may be said: Had this tempter that power, or those resources, which were in any degree sufficient to execute what he promised? To this I must reply, that it seems highly probable that the person, here mentioned, was one of the rulers of the Jews, and possessed of considerable influence among his countrymen. He seems therefore to have been capable of effecting part of what he promised, and he probably imagined that, by the cooperation of Jesus, assisted by the prepossessions of his countrymen in favour of a temporal Messiah, he should be able to do the rest. He founded his hopes on the lucky turns of fortune and the favourable combinations of events—he relied on the fascinating influence of national glory, on the national enthusiasm, and on the powerful agency of great talents, united with great cunning, on the popular credulity.—But when the crafty impostor said to Jesus, “*all this power will I give thee; and the glory of them,*” (of the regions which thou seest) “*for it is mine, and I give it to whom I please,*” there was certainly great ostentation in the boast, and great fallacy in the promise. He overrated his influence or exaggerated his strength. He talked in a style of arrogance, suited to his character, and used such a parade of diction as he thought most likely to procure the confidence, or to relax the scruples, of him whom he wished to bring over to his views—and, at least, he was determined to loose nothing for want of boasting. He, therefore, extols his power and magnifies his resources, in order to persuade Jesus that there were few obstructions to impede

attempt which he incited him to make; that the execution was easy, and that success was certain. We must remember that the Evangelists have briefly stated only *the heads of the temptation*; and that they have not mentioned *all the arguments* which the tempter used, or all the persuasions which he combined in order to corrupt the integrity of our Lord. We must, at least, suppose that the arguments and the persuasions which the tempter did employ, were highly specious and captivating, and which would have inflamed the ambition, perverted the judgment, and corrupted the heart, of any one whose desires were mere sensual, and whose piety was less firm.—But all the subtlety of his insinuations, the spaciousness of his boasts, and the splendour of his promises, had no effect on the mind or the heart of Jesus—he resolutely perseveres in the steadfastness of his obedience, and determines not to suffer any temporal consideration, whatever, to make him, for one moment, deviate from the way of righteousness. To the wicked proposition of the adversary to elevate Jesus to dominion, if he would do him homage, as an inferior, our Lord replies with inflexible integrity: “*Thou shalt worship the LORD thy GOD, and him only shalt thou adore.*” We read that, when the adversary had finished his temptation, he departed from him (Jesus) *for a season*. Hence we are led to suppose that, at other times, he renewed his attempts to seduce Jesus from his duty; and either to make him desist from the duties of Messiah, or else to aspire to become a secular prince, and to usurp a temporal dominion.

When the tempter was departed, we read that angels came and ministered to Jesus;—not as many imagine in order to bring him food, for all the parts of this temptation do not seem to have taken place in immediate succession,—but some interval of time probably occurred between each, and there seems no improbability in supposing that Jesus, when he arrived at Jerusalem, after having foiled the first attempt of the adversary in the desert, embraced the opportunity of procuring food, but which he refused to use any supernatural effort to acquire. This ministration of angels therefore on Jesus, after the temptation, seems to have been de-

signed to give him more convincing proof of the divine favour and protection, and to assure him that the voice, which was heard at his baptism, and by which he was declared to be the beloved Son of God, was not illusory, but the real and solemn declaration of the Deity. See John i. 51.

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Dialogue between a Universalist and a Limitarian.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 151.

Uni. Dear brother, though I can easily conceive how very natural it is for your mind to be exercised with the question which you propose, I am reminded by it, of the words of our blessed Saviour to Peter, who seemed to concern himself more about the disciple John than was justifiable, and asked his master, “And what shall this man do?” Jesus replied; “What is that to thee? follow thou me.” We are accountable only for ourselves, and ourselves only need we search. As we have not the means to know the hearts of others, so there is no special need of our knowing them, as it would not be in our power to alter them if we knew them. It is not for us to judge others, to their own master they stand, or fall. However, in relation to your question, I will relate a short piece of one of my journals, as I think it favours the cause of charity in regard to your question. Some three or four months past, in my journeying in New Hampshire, I preached in the congregational meeting-house, in a most pleasant town, where the senior pastor is an aged man, of a remarkable good disposition, and inclined to liberality in his sentiments. He sat in the desk and heard my discourse, after which he very politely went to my lodgings, spent the evening, with a large circle of friends, who came to hear our conversation. We had not discoursed long before the venerable gentleman introduced what he called the last judgment. I asked him if he read of the last judgment in the scriptures? Certainly, he replied. Please, Rev. Sir, to turn to the passage. The 25th of Matthew was soon found. Here is the account in our Saviour’s own words. Please, Rev. Sir, to point me to that portion of the discourse, which designates that this is the last judgment. Why the whole account is of the final judgment,

when the dead are to be raised and appear at the bar of God. Be so good, Rev. Sir, as to direct me to the proof that the dead will be raised and brought to this judgment. Why do you doubt that this is an account of the last, the final judgment? Sir, I know every word in that chapter, but I never read any thing there about the last judgment, or about the raising of the dead to bring them to this judgment. The venerable old clergyman put on his glasses, and in good earnest, looked into the bible, as if he thought, I will soon convince you and all this company that you are a novice. All was silent—one looked on another, but said not a word—a considerable time passed, when the dear old man lifted up his head, threw himself back in his chair, and exclaimed, never before did I hear any one doubt but this was an account of the last judgment! Both the clergyman and all the company were convinced that there was nothing in the whole account which justified the common opinion. We had much cordial conversation, and parted in hearty friendship and love. Now, my dear brother, I do not hesitate to say, that I fully believe that the Rev. gentleman of whom I have given you this account, did honestly believe what he was on this occasion much disappointed not to find. And as he has lived, studied, and preached many years under this deception, it seems that we are justified in charitably believing that others are going on in the same simplicity.

But to return to our main subject, I must tend you my congratulations for the happy discoveries which you have succeeded in making, by your careful and patient examination of the passage which you brought into discussion.—You will now feel your mind strengthened in the opinion, that other passages which have been used to disprove the universal grace of our heavenly Father, and to maintain the soul-dejecting opinion of endless misery, may, by a careful examination, be found to have been misapplied, and to contain no sentiment which disagrees with the soul-rejoicing hope of the final salvation of all men. But, as you have suggested a desire to bring forward some more passages, which appear rather dark, you will please to make your own selection, and if I am able to assist you in any way it will be greatly

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to my own satisfaction. I am of opinion that our leisure moments can be spent to no better purpose than to increase our knowledge of the divine testimony, to look into the mysteries of the gospel, and to habituate our minds to dwell on the rich subjects of the goodness of God.

Lim. I cannot say that I am now at all blundered with the words of the Saviour to Nicodemus, but as these have been and still are used in opposition to the salvation of all men, I will thank you to state your mind on John iii. 3.

(To be Continued.)

Christian Messenger.

Philadelphia, Saturday, April 29, 1820.

FOR THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

MR. EDITOR,

I was in hopes that the dangerous doctrines which so early found their way into the Messenger, would have died a natural death, and therefore I have let them pass unnoticed; the Unitarian doctrine I have nothing to do with—I would as soon condescend to notice deism, but as I believe there are many well meaning persons who believe in Universalism without considering its awful tendency, my efforts shall be urged against it—there are some other things I shall hereafter notice, more especially the writings of Mr. Z.

There is scarce a writer in your paper who does not appeal to the Book of Nature for a text of Universalism. The sun rises on the evil and on the good, says one; but if the writer had read the histories of tropical climates, he would have found the sun a cause of death; even in this country the "coup de soleil" strikes its victim. On the marshes of the Nile, the sun generates the pestilence that stalks at noonday and sweeps thousands of the natives to the grave. Does the sun rise equally on all? The Book of Nature on its northern page, tells you that some nations are for months at a time without the solar beams. Does it rise with equal benefit on every being? Ask the blind.

Universalists also tell you that the rain descends on the just and the unjust—but witness the terrors of the flood, see man and beast swept to the watery grave. Ask the tiller of the earth, why the crop has failed, he will

say the wet season came on. Does the rain fall equally on all? In Egypt very seldom. Does it fall with equal benefit? View the shelterless. I challenge an investigation into nature—to be sure the breezes of heaven waft their kindly influence on men, but let the dread sirocco of the desert also be considered; let the ocean storm present. Aye! the wreck would be a noble stand to contemplate the universal goodness of nature.

The earth indeed brings forth seed to the sower and bread to the eater, but does the earthquake never swallow up the goodly prospect. Even man, creation's lord, must sink in death—how would it sound in the ears of the bereaved afflicted relatives, to hear the cold snail blooded consolations of natural religion; would it be ease to the mind to philosophize that the remains of one beloved and endeared by every tie, should dissipate, and go to form a new creation in the eternal round of matter.

I do not state these things as murmurs on Providence. I believe in the goodness of Deity, perhaps as much as they do, and I conclude that if sin and misery is not incompatible with infinite goodness in this world, it cannot be in another. God is a sovereign, he consults the best good of the whole, not of individuals; and, like earthly rulers, it is necessary to maintain his government by the prison and the punishment—this may shock the tender feelings of some, yet often do we see these sticklers for diffusive good, very backward in personal—it reminds me of the lines:

"The child that many fathers share,
But seldom knows a parent's care."

By this time my opponents are, I guess, very willing to get off from nature, and quote some of their favourite texts from the Bible—here I am ready for them, and will admit no quibbling or flying from the text.

Psalms cxlv. 10. is a text always in their mouths: "All thy works shall praise thee;" read on a little farther to v. 20, the meaning is shown "all the wicked will he destroy," and the wicked certainly mean *men*. In poetry there is much hyperbole, and that of David is not free from the license.

Many texts brought forward to defend this doctrine of the restitution, refer to the in gathering of the Jews;

thus Gen. xii. 3. Jer. xxxi. 34, are in connection with the covenant made with the "house of Israel," yet the pulpit and the press are engaged in promulgating these as proofs of universal salvation.

Is. xiv. 22. "All the seed of *Israel* shall be justified and shall glory" is another passage of the same nature, but even this does not imply that every individual of the Jews shall be justified, for the word all is limited, as the Universalists themselves allow; and it can only mean all that are alive at the Millennium.

The Universalists say that men are in a state of rebellion now, but the time will come when they shall be under God's authority. This is strange; what, are they not now ruled by him? God rules as much *now* as he ever did, and if so, he will forever, though men may be in eternity in sin and torment, as they now are—*present* evil is not incompatible with divine goodness, and why should future be? I do not expect to change Universalists, they are too often so prejudiced that they despise any opposition; but this paper has a wide circulation among the thoughtless, and with the youth; the novelty pleases them, and we feel it a duty to expose the sophistry which is wrapped about tenets, destructive to religion and morality.

A CHRISTIAN.

REPLY.

A few words will be sufficient in reply to the above. The argument rests on the presumption that as the wisdom and goodness of God have not prevented, for a time, the existence of sin and misery, so the same things may exist, not only in, but throughout, eternity. This argument, if it prove any thing, proves too much; and therefore conclusively proves nothing. The saints endure much affliction here; why not then hereafter? Jesus, here, was a man of sorrow, and acquainted with grief; why not then hereafter? A kind father subjects his obstinate son to the strict and rigid discipline of a school; he does it, however, for the good of his son; is this any evidence that he designs he shall never be free? "A Christian" (perverted name!) is welcome to our columns; but he must remember that the antidote to his poison is at hand.

ED.

"MORAL AGENCY."

The author of this pamphlet has come out again in reply to the several reviews of his work—among which he has seen fit to notice the "Candid Review of both pamphlets, by a Universalist," whose name he has not seen fit to mention, although the Universalist, unlike the Presbyterian and Christian, published his own name. He says that the "second," (viz. the Candid Review above mentioned) "was officious." But in what sense was it officious? Any work that is laid before the public, the public have a right to judge of its merits; and, if any one sees fit, to animadvert upon its contents. The general sentiment which we have opposed, is common to many; and we availed ourselves of this opportunity that our arguments might be more extensively read. If the Christian meant to use the word in a good sense; i. e. kind, doing good offices unasked—then we admit, ours was "officious." We shall, however, take no further notice of the debate between the Presbyterian and Christian; for, believing as we do, that they both stand on ground equally untenable, and having seen no cause to alter the opinions already advanced, it is unnecessary now to take part in their dispute, any farther than barely to notice what has been said of the Universalist.

The Christian has noticed the Universalist in several places in his reply to the Presbyterian, of which we shall say something, being disposed to notice in a respectful manner all the good or ill that may be said of us, from such a respectable source, so far as they have the least bearing on our general sentiment.

On page 12, the Christian says:—"Of this new ability, the Universalist has observed, that, 'perhaps to have called it by the name of either,' that is, natural or moral, 'would have been improper,' and agrees with the Presbyterian, that, 'by taking away one ability, essential to such a union, the whole of the united ability of such powers is taken away'—and of course there is 'no power to obey.' By this artful representation, an imagined excusable impotency is substituted, in the place of a criminal opposition of the heart; and thus every charge of guilt made upon the conscience of the sinner is to be easily parried by the

plea of inability. Against a result so mischievous, discrimination is the remedy."

If by "criminal opposition," the Christian means an opposition not *natural* to men, but produced by his being deceived in some way or other, and in a way in which he ought not to have been deceived, then we agree with him that the opposition is "criminal;" but if he means an opposition "which, *since the fall is natural to him*," then, we contend that such opposition is not "criminal." And the Christian has said, "Such is the strength of man's aversion to good, which, *since the fall is natural to him*, that he never rightly chooses it, but by the aid of divine grace." See Moral Agency, p. 29, Candid Review, p. 10. We made considerable handle of this concession in the Review, of which the Christian has taken no notice, and therefore we have a right to conclude that we did not mistake his meaning.

To be continued.

We have neglected hitherto to publish *Marriages and Deaths* in the Messenger; but as the number of subscribers has considerably increased of late, we shall in future insert them.

MARRIED,

By the Rev. Mr. Kneeland, Mr. EDWARD CARTER to Miss ELIZA TURNER—Mr. JAMES H. JONES to Miss RACHEL ENOCHS—Mr. SAMPSON DAVIS to Miss HANNAH WARD—Mr. JOHN K. MURPHY to Miss MARIA ROBERTS—Mr. JOHN MINGLE, junr. to Miss ANNA CATHERINE BROWN.

By the Rev. Dr. Staughton, JOHN P. HARRISON, M. D. of Louisville, Ky. to Miss MARY T. WARNER, daughter of Mrs. Sarah Warner, of this place.

In Hebron, Connecticut, the celebrated LORENZO DOW, to Miss LUCY DOALBEAR, of Montville.

* This was the first marriage by Mr. K. after the returns which have been published. See page 87.

DIED,

On board the Electra on her passage from London, Mr. JACOB NEFF, formerly of this city.—On Tuesday morning last, in the 60th year of her age, ANN CATHERINE BEEBE.

At Worcester, Mass. on Friday the 14th inst. the Hon LEVI LINCOLN, formerly Attorney General of the United States, and afterwards Lieutenant Governor of that Commonwealth.

On the 4th inst. in Tewksbury, near new Germantown, (N.J.) FREDERICK PICKLE, aged 100 years. When he was 94 years of age, he cut with a cradle 500 sheaves of rye in a day. At 97 he went into the woods and split 100 chesnut rails in less than a day. He was regular and temperate in his habits, and enjoyed good health until within about a year before his death. His widow is 90, and they have lived in the marriage state 70 years.

TO OUR PATRONS.

THIS NUMBER completes the third quarter of the Messenger, and those subscribers who are in arrears are earnestly solicited to settle up to the present time, at least; and if others, who have been punctual from the first, could now pay in advance for the next quarter, it would greatly oblige the Proprietors, as Mr. Waldie, the late printer, has sold out his establishment, and is about leaving the city.

POETS' CORNER.

TO MY MOTHER,

With my Miniature.

MOTHER! once more I bid adieu—

Once more to Southern climes I rove;

But, ere we part, I leave with you,

In token of my filial love,

This Miniature—for thee 'twas done.

O, then accept, before we part,

This semblance of your wand'ring Son;

And sometimes wear it near your heart;

For, 'till that heart shall cease to be,

Anxious, it oft will beat for me.

I oft before have bid farewell,

O'er mountains far away to roam,

But ne'er my bosom ceas'd to swell

With joy, at thoughts of former home.

When prosperous Sun's illum'd my way,

And new friends swell'd the social throng;

Or, with sweet maids, I chanc'd to stray

Where distant rivers roll along;

Though bless'd these scenes—these friends sincere,

I ne'er forgot my Mother dear.

With love you watch'd my infant hours;

My boyhood days engag'd your care;

You strew'd my rising path with flowers,

And breath'd for me the pious prayer.

And now, when manhood's scenes I know,

Shall I your guardian care forget?

No!—be my path through bliss or woe,

Remembrance shall retain it yet!

Shall oft life's early joys restore,

And bless my walks on distant shore!

And, Mother! now in life's decline,

When ripening years steal swift away,

The pleasing, grateful task be mine,

To attempt your kindness to repay.

Be mine the pleasure, mine the pride,

(Nor half my duty then is done,)

To calm, for you, life's evening tide,

And watch with care your setting sun!

And constant as maternal love,

My duteous gratitude shall prove.

BARTON.

Ontario County, N. Y. 1829.

PRINTING

Neatly executed at this Office.